



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Fix My Streets Financing Working Group
Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2016 at 10:30 a.m.

Location:	New Orleans Mosquito, Termite and Rodent Control Board 2100 Leon C. Simon, 2nd Floor Training Room New Orleans, LA 70122
Agenda	I. CALL TO ORDER II. ROLL CALL III. NEW BUSINESS IV. CONSIDERATION OF ANY OTHER MATTERS THAT MAY COME BEFORE THE COMMITTEE V. PUBLIC COMMENT VI. ADJOURNMENT

V. Public Comment

The comments below were offered by public meeting attendees, via written comment cards. Elements of the comment cards have been edited for clarity. Contact information has been adjusted to ensure privacy.

1. Representative from the **Bureau of Governmental Research**: The Bureau of Governmental Research provided suggestions on how to fund future infrastructure projects in their report, "*The \$1 Billion Question: Do the Tax Dedications in New Orleans Make Sense?*" Please consider adopting BGR's recommendations. The report is available here: http://www.bgr.org/files/reports/BGR_TaxDedications.pdf
2. **Representative from Bike Easy**: How are you approaching budgeting for Complete Streets and bicycling infrastructure? If you are not aware, please explore the new federal transportation bill for funding dedicated to active transportation infrastructure and incorporate that into the budgeting.

Response: The Complete Streets Policy and ongoing development of bicycle infrastructure is part of each Department of Public Works project. Thank you for the suggestion, DPW is always looking for additional revenue sources to improve the transportation system.

3. **Representatives from Supreme Court of Louisiana**: Please repair the portion of Conti St. between Royal St. and Chartres St. and Chartres St. between Conti St. and St. Louis St. Other French Quarter roadways were recently paved but these portions of the French Quarter have not yet been paved.

Response: The Department of Public Works is aware of the conditions of these roadways. A maintenance crew has been dispatched to address portions of the roadway however simple filling of the existing potholes will not correct this issue. The top layer of asphalt on this portion of the roadways need to be removed and replaced. DPW will attempt to address the conditions described as staffing and funding allow.

The recently repaved roadways described by the speakers were addressed by the State's Paths to Progress program. That work was completed in advance of the Super Bowl. For more information about Paths to Progress visit their website:

<http://www.pavinglaroads.com/>

4. **Representative from N. Kenilworth Homeowners Association:** What are the City's plans to completely reconstruct Morrison Rd. from Mayo Blvd to Read Blvd? What are the City's plans to repair Curran Rd. from Downman Rd. to Burke St.?
5. **Representative from New Orleans East Business Alliance:** This representative is disgusted that the SWB's last fee increase did not go to improve damaged infrastructure. It went into the general fund.

Response: State law requires that water funds collected by the SWB can only be used for the potable water treatment and distribution system. Funds collected for the sewage system can only be used for sewage collection and treatment. The city does not have access to those funds and no money from the SWB rate increase will or can be diverted to the general fund. The SWB and city funds are kept completely separate.

100 percent of the water portion of the rate increase is being spent on upgrades for the potable water distribution system and the water treatment process. 100 percent of the sewer rate increase is being spent on the sewage collection system and sewage treatment.

6. **Representative from CLIMANA:** DPW should install additional signage to manage increased traffic congestion generated by major street repair work, such as the SELA work uptown.

Response: The Department of Public Works follows the traffic signage guidelines set forth by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices developed by the Federal Highway Administration. Only if traffic counts justify such signage would the DPW consider installing additional stop signs near construction sites. For example, the criteria for all-way stop control are specific and call for a minimum volume of 500 vehicles per hour on both roadways and 200 vehicles per hour on the minor street for 8 hours of a day. Only if this threshold was met would a stop sign be installed.

7. **Anonymous question:** Who are the silent members of our community who do not pay property taxes?

Response: Section 150 of the City Municipal Code exempts types of non-profit organizations, such as educational and religious institutes, from paying annual property taxes.

8. **Representative from CLIMANA:** Does the Audubon Zoo, Audubon Golf Course and Aquarium pay for their water? If so, does Audubon pay the whole bill in its entirety?

Response: The non-revenue generating portion of the Audubon Institute receives free water. For example, Audubon Park does receive free water and they maintain water usage levels below their cap.

9. **Representative from CLIMANA:** Does the City pay for water used in public buildings?

Response: The Sewerage and Water Board offers free water accounts to certain entities. In general, free water accounts are available to city buildings but water usage is monitored, metered and capped. If any facility that has a significant increase or is using too much water, it would be subject to inspection by SWB Plumbing Dept. Usage above the cap would be billed at the regular rate.

10. **Representative from CLIMANA:** How is the public educated on the important of not parking on drains or on catch basins? Are residents taught how to clean out catch basins?

Response: The City is currently in the early stages of developing an outreach and education plan, with a non-profit organization, that focuses on catch basin maintenance and care. The limited Department of Public Works budget allows cleaning of each catch basin, with a vacuum truck, an average of once every 20 years. Requests to clear out catch basins can be made by calling 311 Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm. Additionally, each spring residents are asked to assist the City in maintaining the health of the drainage system by remembering to sweep in front of catch basins and empty debris in the garbage. Catch basin lids are made of steel and can weigh up to 50 lbs, the City does not want residents to lift catch basin lids and attempt to clear the basins on their own.

11. **Representative from Algiers:** Will there be a workforce development program for residents to get jobs working on future construction projects?

Response: Yes, the Department of Public Works and Sewerage and Water Board are coordinating efforts with the City's Job 1 and Economic Development departments to ensure Orleans Parish residents have the opportunity to work on future construction projects. Potential employees may learn more here: <http://www.nola.gov/economic-development/workforce-development/job1/>

12. **Representative from Upper Ninth Ward:** Please address Mazant St. from Florida Ave. to St. Claude Ave.

Response: Portions of Mazant St. between Florida Ave. and St. Claude Ave. are scheduled to be addressed via the Recovery Roads program projects in St. Claude and the Florida neighborhood. The construction timelines for the Recovery Roads program are available here: RecoveryRoads.nola.gov

13. **Representative from Uptown:** What are your assumptions about growth in population and property values? With respect to funding what are the key uncertainties that would impact revenue? How would you mitigate these uncertainties?

Response: The city's financial forecast is based on growing population over the next several years of about the 1% per year level. This population growth continues the trend seen since Katrina. Property values are anticipated to grow about 2-3% per year over the next few years. The key uncertainties regarding revenue for the city's governments relate to factors that could impact tourism to the city (such as a national economic downturn which might affect business and convention travel and disposal income for leisure travelers), significant changes in the valuation of property (which would change the trend for property taxes), or significant events that would affect non-tax revenues (state policy changes or major changes in licensing or fine policies). The most important tool to mitigate uncertainty is to have a fund balance at such a level that unanticipated changes in revenue in one year can be absorbed and then planned for in the next budget, as an option, rather than the city simply being forced to drastically changed planned and budgeted spending within a calendar year as the only policy choice.

14. **Representative from the Willowbrook Neighborhood Association:** Would it be possible to build a bridge at Alvar St., to add a fourth bridge over the Industrial Canal?

Response: Thank you for the feedback. At this time the DPW does not have plans to build an additional bridge at Alvar St.

15. **Representative from Oak Park Neighborhood Association:** Seville Dr. is a mess and needs to be reconstructed.

Response: The Department of Public Works has plans to reconstruct portions of Seville Dr. between St. Bernard Ave. and Cartier Ave. as part of the Recovery Roads – Filmore project. Planned work includes replacing the waterline. Learn more about our plans at RecoveryRoads.nola.gov.

16. **Representative from Tonti and Esplanade Ave.:** School bus traffic from Philip Wheatley School is tearing up our streets and the buses are speeding. When I was a Richard's Disposal driver, we had to slow down when residents asked us to, why don't the school buses have to slow down?

Response: The New Orleans Police Department is responsible for enforcing traffic laws. The Department of Public Works has forwarded this issue to the NOPD to address. We will also send out a crew to address the potholes in your neighborhood and follow up with the school to discuss this issue with their drivers.

17. Representative from Lake Willow Neighborhood: What is happening at the pump station in the 8000 block of Morrison Rd.? That project has been under construction for 9 years.

Response: The pump station in the 8000 block of Morrison Rd. is being rebuilt. This project is currently 90 percent complete and scheduled to be completed in May 2016.

18. Representative from Lake Willow Neighborhood: The Read Blvd and Lake Forest drainage canals are overgrown with plants. What is SWB's plan to address this issue?

Response: The SWB has a foliage abatement program that is aggressively working to address aquatic vegetation in drainage canals throughout our system.

19. Representative from St. Roch: There isn't any drainage in the 1500, 1600 or 1700 blocks of St. Ferdinand St. What are the City's plans to correct this issue?

Response: About 20 percent of the city drains storm water via drainage ditches and bioswales located adjacent to the paved roadway. This portion of St. Ferdinand St. drains via ditches. Over time the drainage ditches have filled in with debris. Now that DPW has the appropriate equipment available to clear the drainage ditches, we will put these on a list to be cleared.

20. Representative from Villa Sites Subdivision: If money is allocated for a subdivision and another subdivision's work has started but they run out of money, will money be allocated for another subdivision or would the money be taken from the first and given to the second?

Response: This issue would be addressed on a case by case basis.

21. Representative from the Willowbrook Neighborhood Association: Repair and repave Michoud Blvd.

Response: The Department of Public Works recently completed the Michoud Front Door Infrastructure Improvements project on Old Gentilly Road from I-510 - Chef Menteur Highway. DPW also has a reconstruction project planned on Michoud Blvd. from Chef Menteur Blvd - Dwyer Rd. That project is scheduled to begin when bond funds are available in late 2016. Future repairs to other portions of Michoud Blvd. would occur as staffing and funding allow.

22. Representative from Fairmont Park: Why can't the City tap into revenue generated from events and festivals such as Mardi Gras? The parking meter rates also just increased, that could be another source of funding.

Response: Revenue generated from festivals such as Mardi Gras and parking meters are pooled in the general fund. Those funds are then allocated to each department. In 2016, the DPW budget was increased to allow for street maintenance crews to work in each Council District each day of the week (verses one day a week) and to allow the

Streetlight division to maintain the streetlight system operations at 95 percent. To help prioritize the 2017 budget, please plan to attend Mayor Landrieu's 2017 Budgeting for Outcome public meetings. The meetings are typically held each August.

23. **Representative from N. Kenilworth Homeowners Association:** Completely reconstruct Morrison Rd. between Mayo Blvd. and Burke Ave.

Response: Full reconstruction of a roadway costs about \$450,000 per block, an average New Orleans block is about 350 ft long and 26 ft wide. The distance between Mayo Blvd. and Burke Ave. is approximately 1.5 miles however Morrison Rd. is a wide and divided street. Reconstruction of the portion of roadway you describe could potentially cost approximately \$20 M. At this time the DPW does not have funding available to reconstruct Morrison Rd. between Mayo Blvd. and Burke Ave.